MARVEL COMICS
THE PUNISHER WAR ZONE
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BLOOD IN THE WATER!

WHEN MOBSTERS SLEW HIS FAMILY, FRANK CASTLE VOWED TO SPEND THE REST OF HIS LIFE AVENGING THEM! TRAINED AS A MARINE, AND EQUIPPED WITH A STATE-OF-THE-ART ARSENAL, HE NOW WAGES A ONE-MAN WAR ON CRIME!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .

THE PUNISHER WAR ZONE

THESE DAYS MY NAME IS JOHNNY TOWER.
I'M A HOT UP-AND-COMER IN THE BROOKLYN MOB. A PROSPECT.
MICKY FONDOZZI, THE MOOK WHO'S SPONSORING ME, VOLUNTEERS US FOR A LITTLE ACTION AT THE FOOD TERMINAL IN HUNT'S POINT.
A PRODUCE IMPORTER HERE IS LOOKING TO CARVE A NICHE IN SOME OF THE CARBONES' "INTERESTS."
WE'RE HERE TO DISCOURAGE HIM.
SO HOW WE GONNA DO THIS?
I DUNNO. I'M NOT UP FOR THIS RAMBO #&%@#.
ME, I LIKE A NICE CAR BOMB.
YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK?
WE CAN'T WAIT T'HEAR, JOHNNY.
I SAY SAL CARBONE SAID HE WANTS TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF THIS CLOWN.
LET'S LEAVE LOTS OF EXAMPLES.
TAKE THE PLACE HEAD ON. LET THE COPS SORT 'EM OUT.
MAYBE MY IDIOT COUSIN'S GOT SOMETHIN'.
GOT ANY IDEAS HOW WE DO THIS?
I GOT A FEW MIGHT WORK.

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THE NUTTS WE'RE AFTER ARE MEMBERS OF THE DEPANINI FAMILY.

HARD-NOSED SICILIANS EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM.

NARCOTICS. PROSTITUTION. EXTORTION AND NUMBERS.

THEY'RE IN IT UP TO THEIR NECKS.

BLOOD IN THE WATER

CHUCK DIXON - WRITER JOHN ROMITA JR. - PENCILER KLAUS JANSON - INKER
JIM NOVAK - LETTERER GREGORY WRIGHT - COLORIST DON DALEY - EDITOR
TOM DEFALCO - EDITOR IN CHIEF

THE FOOD CENTER IS A CLEVER FRONT. TRUCKS GOING IN AND OUT, DAY AND NIGHT.

AS THE PUNISHER, I MIGHT NEVER HAVE FOUND THIS PLACE.

AS JOHNNY TOWER, I HAVE THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM.

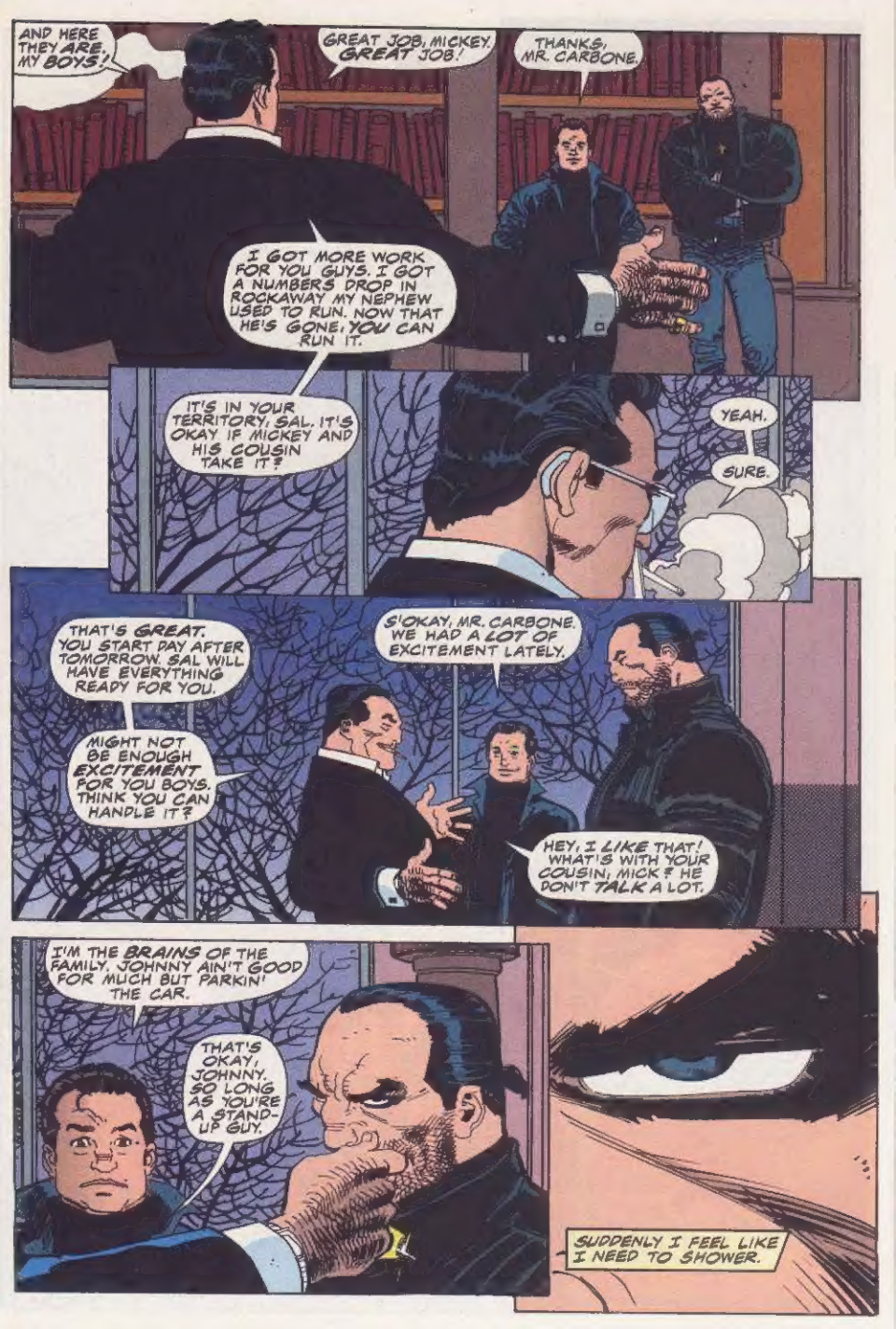
HEAR THAT?
I AIN'T DEAF. YEAH, I HEARD IT.
AIN'T COPS. WE WOULDA' KNOWN.
THE RAID IS A MASSACRE.
OSCAR DEPANINI AND HIS SOLDIERS DON'T STAND A CHANCE.
PURE MURDER.
EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM IS ON THE CARBONES' HIT LIST.
THEY'RE ON THE PUNISHER'S HIT LIST, TOO.

SO FAR I HAVEN'T SEEN OSCAR.
THE BOYS MUSTA TOOK CARE OF THINGS.
THAT'S WHAT I PAY 'EM FOR.
SHOOTIN' STOPPED.
VINNIE?
WHAT'S ALL THE NOISE? YOU GUYS--
ART?
UHH!
I KNOW ALL ABOUT OSCAR.
I KNOW HIS BREED.
THE KIND WHO GIVES THE WORD AND PEOPLE GET CRIPPLED.
THE KIND WHO ORDERS PEOPLE KILLED.
PEOPLE LIKE MY WIFE AND CHILDREN.

A GOOD NIGHT.
A MAJOR MOB OPERATION DOWN.
A BIG BODY COUNT.
BUT I DON'T WANT TO DO MY NEW FAMILY ANY MORE FAVORS THAN I HAVE TO.
THE DEPANINIS HAVE FILES AND RECORDS THAT WOULD BE VALUABLE TO THE CARBONES.
THEY WOULD SMOOTH THINGS FOR WHEN THEY TAKE OVER OSCAR'S RACKETS.
I LIKE MAKING IT HARDER ON THEM.
JEEZE...
TOOK 'EM ALL DOWN.
ALL RIGHT!
MANOMANOMAN...

WE DID IT, JOHNNY! LIKE FISH IN A BARREL OF MONKEYS!
THEY'RE ALL DEAD!
NOT QUITE ALL...
JUH... JUH...
WHUH-WHAT'D YOU DO THAT FOR?
THEY WERE ON MY LIST, TOO.

DEPANINI'S ARE GONNA HAVE A BIG FUNERAL. THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE TO HIRE PALLBEARERS BECAUSE THERE'S NOT ENOUGH FAMILY LEFT TO CARRY THEM ALL.
WE'LL SEND LOTS OF FLOWERS.
"WITH OUR DEEPEST REGRETS--THE CARBONES."
NOT SO SURE, JULIUS. MICKEY AND HIS MORON COUSIN MADE A MESS OF THINGS.
WHAT'S THE PROBLEM, SAL?
WE LOST A FEW OF OUR OWN. THEY BLEW UP DEPANINI'S BOOKS.
ONE OF THE GUYS GOT KILLED WAS OUR NEPHEW MARCO. OUR SISTER'S KID, FOR CRIPE'S SAKE.
HOW WE GOIN' TO TELL HER ABOUT THAT?
YOU WORRY ENOUGH FOR THE BOTH OF US, LITTLE BROTHER.
SOMEBODY SHOULD WORRY, JULIUS.
YOU JUST REMEMBER THAT I'M THE ELDEST SON, SAL. IF POP WANTED YOU TO BE CAPO IT'D BE DIFFERENT. SO JUST KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.
SURE.


AND HERE THEY ARE, MY BOYS!
GREAT JOB, MICKEY. GREAT JOB!
THANKS, MR. CARBONE.
I GOT MORE WORK FOR YOU GUYS. I GOT A NUMBERS DROP IN ROCKAWAY MY NEPHEW USED TO RUN. NOW THAT HE'S GONE, YOU CAN RUN IT.
IT'S IN YOUR TERRITORY, SAL. IT'S OKAY IF MICKEY AND HIS COUSIN TAKE IT?
YEAH.
SURE.
THAT'S GREAT. YOU START DAY AFTER TOMORROW. SAL WILL HAVE EVERYTHING READY FOR YOU.
S'OKAY, MR. CARBONE. WE HAD A LOT OF EXCITEMENT LATELY.
MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH EXCITEMENT FOR YOU BOYS. THINK YOU CAN HANDLE IT?
HEY, I LIKE THAT! WHAT'S WITH YOUR COUSIN, MICK? HE DON'T TALK A LOT.
I'M THE BRAINS OF THE FAMILY. JOHNNY AIN'T GOOD FOR MUCH BUT PARKIN' THE CAR.
THAT'S OKAY, JOHNNY. SO LONG AS YOU'RE A STAND-UP GUY.
SUDDENLY I FEEL LIKE I NEED TO SHOWER.

DADDY!
ROSALIE--
HAVE YOU SEEN THE MENU FOR THE WEDDING?
ENRICO'S FAMILY ARE FROM NAPOLI. THEY DON'T WANT PASTA SERVED AS A MAIN DISH. IT'S TACKY!
I WANT THE MEAL TO BE CONTINENTAL!
ROSA, YOU KNOW BETTER THAN TO INTERRUPT MY BUSINESS WITH YOUR WEDDING PLANS.
WELL, YOU DON'T MIND MIXING MY WEDDING WITH BUSINESS, IT'S MORE LIKE A MERGER THAN A MARRIAGE.
NOW, ROSALIE...
SAL, COULD YOU TAKE MICKEY AND HIS COUSIN TO THE DOOR? I'LL BE THROUGH HERE IN A MINUTE.
DOES MICKEY'S COUSIN HAVE A NAME, DADDY?
IT'S JOHNNY, BABY. NOW TELL ME ABOUT THE MENU.

NOT BAD NOT BAD!
A NUMBERS BANK. WE'RE GONNA RAKE IN THE CASH, M'MAN. KNOWIN' YOU'S STARTIN' TO BE REAL LUCKY FOR ME.
ULP!
MAKING ME THE DUMMY OF THE TEAM WAS A CUTE TOUCH, FONDOZZI. BUT LET'S NOT TAKE IT TOO FAR.
YOU REMEMBER WHO'S HOLDING YOUR TICKET IT'S NOT THOSE MUTTS IN THERE. IT'S ME.
OKAY!
I'M YOUR LIFELINE, PAISAN
YOU REMEMBER THAT AND YOU MIGHT COME THROUGH THIS WITH YOUR HEAD STILL ATTACHED.

FEELS GOOD TO BE BACK IN THE U.S.A. MAN.

GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT, SHOTGUN.

HOPE YOU LIKE THE LITTLE COMING HOME PRESENT

YOU KNOW I LIKE ME TOYS

YOU GOT SOMETHIN' YOU'D LIKE DONE WITH THIS FINE PIECE OF ORDINANCE? OR IS IT JUST 'CAUSE YOU MISSED ME?

ACTUALLY, WE DO HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.

IT'S ALL HERE MULTIPLE TARGETS THIS TIME.

LOOKS LIKE MOB GUYS

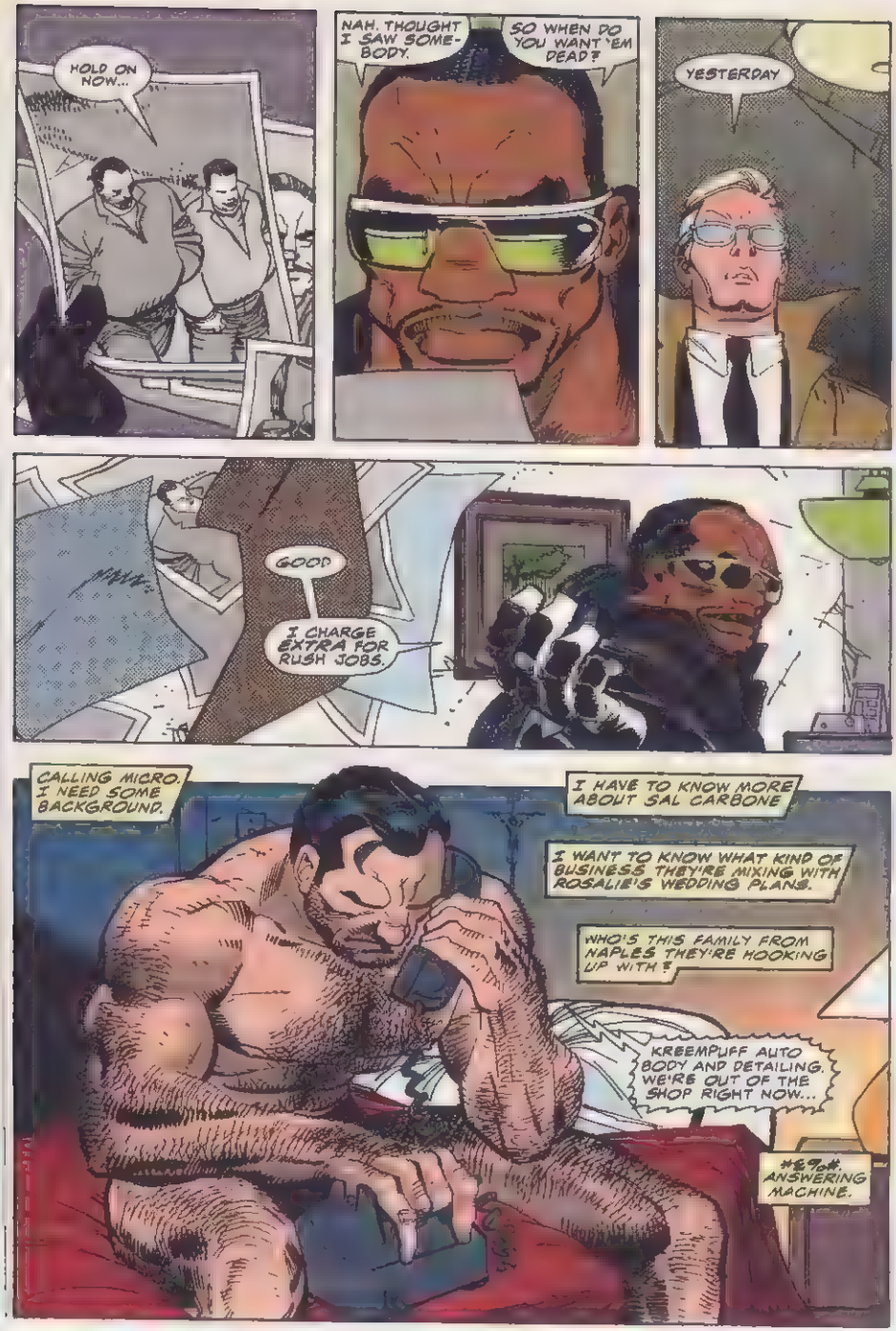
A NEW YORK BASED FAMILY THAT'S LOOKING TO SPREAD THEIR INFLUENCE NOW THAT THE KINGPIN'S OUT OF THE PICTURE.

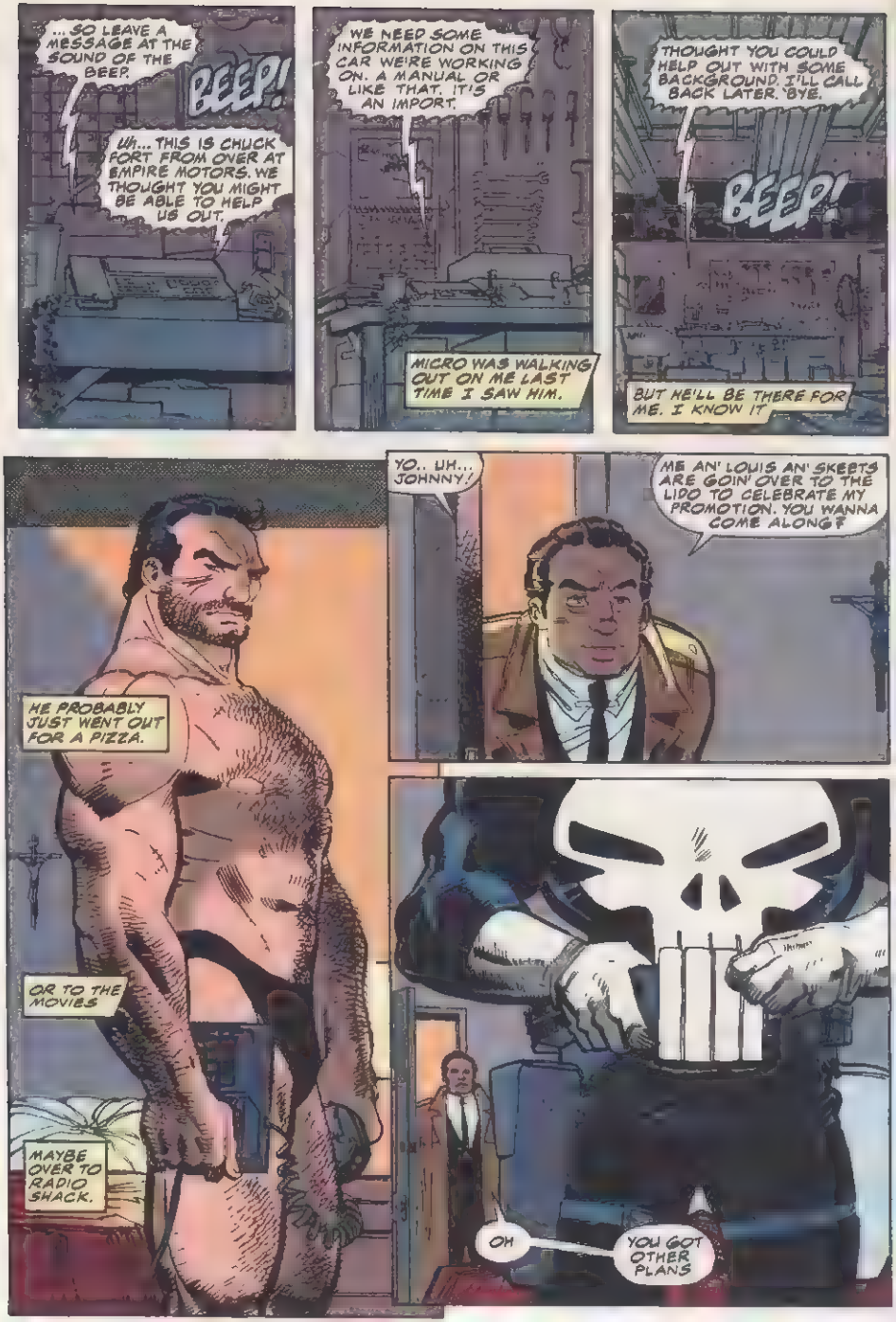
THE OTHERS ARE EUROPEAN CRIME FIGUREG. THERE'S BEEN SOME FRIENDLY GESTURING BETWEEN THEM. WE THINK THERE MIGHT BE SOME KIND OF AN ALLIANCE IN THE OFFING.

SINCE WHEN ARE YOU GUYS INTERESTED IN THE MAFIA?

WELL, THEY'RE NOT OUR MAFIOSOS WE'RE TRYING TO KEEP THINGS STATUS QUO

UH-HUH. AND STATUS QUO FOR THESE GUYS 5 9 X FEET UNDER. HUH?


HOLD ON NOW...
NAH. THOUGHT I SAW SOMEBODY.
SO WHEN DO YOU WANT 'EM DEAD?
YESTERDAY
GOOD.
I CHARGE EXTRA FOR RUSH JOBS.
CALLING MICRO. I NEED SOME BACKGROUND.
I HAVE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT SAL CARBONE
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF BUSINESS THEY'RE MIXING WITH ROSALIE'S WEDDING PLANS.
WHO'S THIS FAMILY FROM NAPLES THEY'RE HOOKING UP WITH?
KREEMPUFF AUTO BODY AND DETAILING. WE'RE OUT OF THE SHOP RIGHT NOW...
#&?%#. ANSWERING MACHINE.


... SO LEAVE A MESSAGE AT THE SOUND OF THE BEEP.
BEEP!
UH... THIS IS CHUCK FORT FROM OVER AT EMPIRE MOTORS. WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP US OUT.
WE NEED SOME INFORMATION ON THIS CAR WE'RE WORKING ON. A MANUAL OR LIKE THAT. IT'S AN IMPORT.
MICRO WAS WALKING OUT ON ME LAST TIME I SAW HIM.
THOUGHT YOU COULD HELP OUT WITH SOME BACKGROUND. I'LL CALL BACK LATER. 'BYE.
BEEP!
BUT HE'LL BE THERE FOR ME. I KNOW IT
HE PROBABLY JUST WENT OUT FOR A PIZZA.
OR TO THE MOVIES
MAYBE OVER TO RADIO SHACK.
YO.. UH... JOHNNY!
ME AN' LOUIS AN' SKEETS ARE GOIN' OVER TO THE LIDO TO CELEBRATE MY PROMOTION. YOU WANNA COME ALONG?
OH
YOU GOT OTHER PLANS

THREE LITTLE NUMBERS.
THE MOB TAKES IN MILLIONS WITH RUNNERS ALL OVER TOWN.
GRANDMAS PLAY IT.
MOST STATES HAVE LOTTERIES BUT THE MOB PAYS BETTER ODDS AND THEY DON'T GIVE ANYONE ANY BULL ABOUT HELPING SENIOR CITIZENS.
LIQUOR
UNLESS YOU COUNT THE OLD FOLKS OUT ON RIKERS.
THIS SECRET IDENTITY BUSINESS IS A DRAG.
CAN'T LET THEM SEE ME IN CASE ONE OF THEM LIVES TO TALK.
CUSTOM MUFFLERS ON THE BIKE.
SOUND SUPPRESSOR ON THE HECKLER
NO NEED TO LET THEM KNOW WHAT'S COMING

WHUH?
WHAT'S THIS MOOK'S PROBLEM?
SMAT! SMAT! SMAT! SMAT! SMAT! SMAT!
A NINE TO THE HEAD FOR EACH OF THEM.
PAINLESS AND QUIET.
PRIME TARGETS ARE UPSTAIRS.
...A FULL COURT PRESS AND THE CELTICS ARE UNDER THEIR OWN BACK-BOARD AGAIN...
E@%$#! THEY AIN'T EVEN GONNA MAKE THE SPREAD!
YOU GUYS HEAR SOMETHIN'?
LIKE WHAT?
DUNNO. A NOISE.

NOBODY'S MOVING

THEY CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

THEY CAN'T BELIEVE SOMEBODY WOULD TAKE OFF A CARBONE OPERATION.

TAKE OFF EVERY LIFE AND EVERY DOLLAR.

SIRENS.

SOMEBODY CALLED 911

I PLANNED FOR THIS

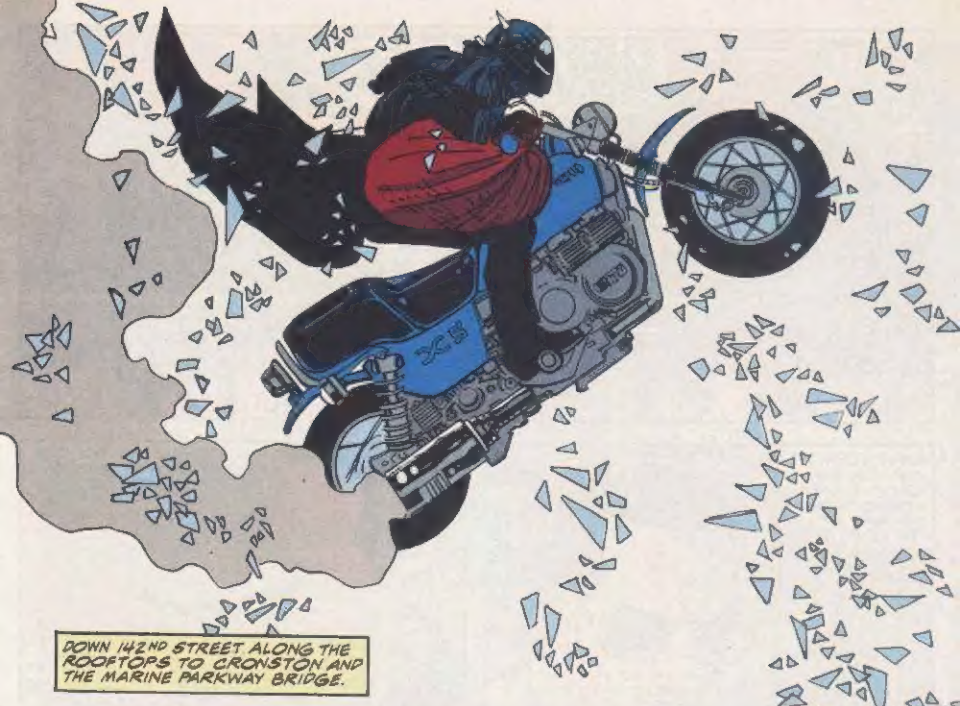
I'M NOT GOING OUT THE WAY I CAME IN

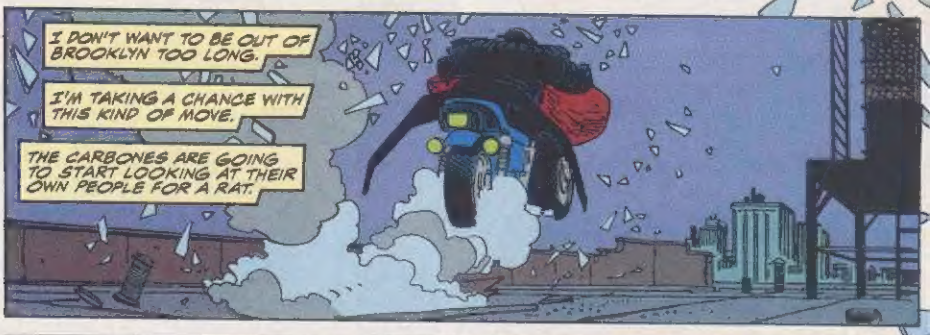
I SCOPED OUT MY ESCAPE ROUTE THIS AFTERNOON

A FULL WEEK'S TAKE AND A DOZEN DEAD WISE GUYS.

THE MONEY WILL GO TO THE WAR CHEST FOR MORE TOYS

I'M STARTING TO LIKE THIS JOHNNY TOWER ACT.

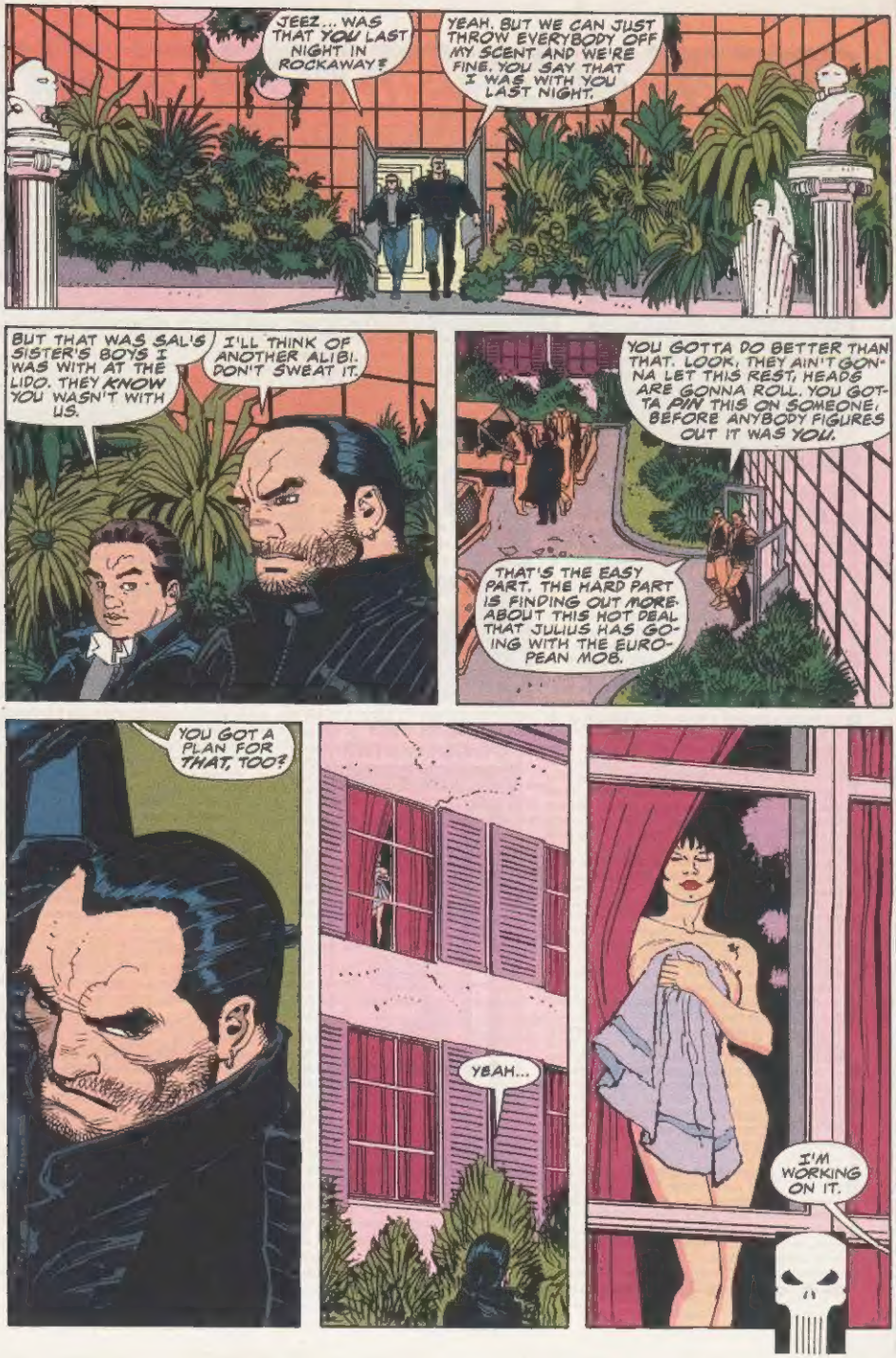

DOWN 142ND STREET ALONG THE ROOFTOPS TO CRONSTON AND THE MARINE PARKWAY BRIDGE.


I DON'T WANT TO BE OUT OF BROOKLYN TOO LONG.
I'M TAKING A CHANCE WITH THIS KIND OF MOVE.
THE CARBONES ARE GOING TO START LOOKING AT THEIR OWN PEOPLE FOR A RAT.

BUT THE PRIZES ARE SO FAT AND THE KILL ZONE SO CROWDED.

I'M ONLY HUMAN.

I GOT DEAD SOLDIERS AND TWO HUNDRED GRAND IN RECEIPTS MISSING.
THE COPS ARE HAVING A PARTY WITH THE NUMBERS CHITS AND BOOKS LEFT ALL OVER THE PLACE.
WHAT THE #&¢# IS GOING ON, SAL?
DON'T LOOK AT ME, JULIUS. YOU PUT THESE MONKEYS IN CHARGE OF THINGS.
I ONLY GAVE 'EM THE JOB YESTERDAY! THEY AIN'T EVEN BEEN THERE, FOR CRIPE'S SAKE!
THIS SCREW-UP IS ALL YOURS, LITTLE BROTHER.
YOU AND YOUR ATTITUDE ARE GOING TO FOUL UP THIS WHOLE THING WE GOT WITH THE EUROPEANS. THEY SEE US FALLING APART, THEY'LL LOOK SOMEWHERE ELSE.
THIS THING I GOT SET UP IS SO SWEET, I CAN'T LET SOME LOWLIFES TAKE IT FROM US.
I WANT MICKEY AND JOHNNY TO FIND OUT WHO DID THIS.
YOU'RE CRAZY, JULIUS! THESE GUYS GIVE MORONS A BAD NAME.
YOU'RE QUESTIONING ME, SAL?
LOOK, THESE MOOKS HAVE ALREADY HEARD TOO MUCH. SEND 'EM OUTSIDE, OKAY?
MICKEY, JOHNNY, TAKE A WALK. WE GOT SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT HERE.


JEEZ... WAS THAT YOU LAST NIGHT IN ROCKAWAY?
YEAH. BUT WE CAN JUST THROW EVERYBODY OFF MY SCENT AND WE'RE FINE. YOU SAY THAT I WAS WITH YOU LAST NIGHT.
BUT THAT WAS SAL'S SISTER'S BOYS I WAS WITH AT THE LIDO. THEY KNOW YOU WASN'T WITH US.
I'LL THINK OF ANOTHER ALIBI. DON'T SWEAT IT.
YOU GOTTA DO BETTER THAN THAT. LOOK, THEY AIN'T GONNA LET THIS REST, HEADS ARE GONNA ROLL. YOU GOTTA PIN THIS ON SOMEONE, BEFORE ANYBODY FIGURES OUT IT WAS YOU.
THAT'S THE EASY PART. THE HARD PART IS FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT THIS HOT DEAL THAT JULIUS HAS GOING WITH THE EUROPEAN MOB.
YOU GOT A PLAN FOR THAT, TOO?
YEAH...
I'M WORKING ON IT.

WAR CORRESPONDENCE

DON DALEY
EDITOR
TIM TUOHY
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Attention Correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your name and address though we will withhold that info by request!

WELCOME...TO THE WAR ZONE.

By now you've read at least one, and probably, two issues of what we think is the hottest book to debut in this country in a looooooooong time.

Too long, for the Punisher fans who've been scraping by with only monthly issues of THE PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL, bi-weekly chapters of THE PUNISHER, twice-yearly installments of THE PUNISHER ARMORY, and the incidental Punisher graphic novel, trade paperback or bookshelf. Well, the wait is over, and the feedback indicates that the wait was worth it!

We wanted to know what you thought of WAR ZONE as soon as possible, so as part of W.A.M.'s (that's WILD AGENTS OF MARVEL, the official Marvel fan club) ongoing policy of "sneak peeks," all W.A.M.ites received the first issue -- in glorious black and white! Excerpted comments follow:

"Love the bit with the blowtorch, steak and the popsicle, Mickey was really terrified, who wouldn't be?"/"This is the Punisher as he really is. I could feel the paranoia coming right off the page and it sounded so true to life. He knows he can't trust anybody and it was just a matter of time before it went a little too far. A very obsessed man who is well on his way to becoming unglued."/"When Shotgun meets the Punisher, the bullets will really start flying."/"Frank is a man people view in many different ways, and I don't believe that there is just one 'correct' way. Please, give creators a blank page and let continuity be the last priority. I hope we will see different creators, intriguing, even bizarre ideas, alternative views of the Punisher."/"The popsicle was a 'cool' trick."/"The Punisher was meant to look like this."/"Chuck's the best writer in the biz."/"Romita's pencils are as impeccable as ever...the story is rivetting."/"I especially liked the part where the Punisher has the guy hung upside down and pretends to use the blowtorch on him."/"Is this title going to be *sans* Micro? Is this B-tman without R-bin? Will the evil in Frank Castle surface without Micro's soothing influence? I eagerly await the outcome."/"I hope Micro and Frank get back together because they were a killer team."/"John Romita Jr. has never done better. Great job."/"The feel of a graphic novel in a monthly title..."/"I'm glad to see Shotgun back, haven't seen him since DAREDEVIL #273. It will be great to see the Punisher and Shotgun go head to head or side by side."/"The only bad point about the entire issue was that the Punisher had a hairy back. It is the best art I have ever seen John Romita, Jr. do, maybe because Klaus Janson's inks over John's pencils are so great. The way John works with shadows really makes the art come out at you. The storytelling is great. I give Klaus and John an 'A'. Chuck Dixon is one creative demon. The ending was quite a surprise. The way the Punisher got Mickey to talk with only a blowtorch and a popsicle was fantastic."/"Please don't let Micro leave or be killed. He is the only person that keeps Frank Castle from losing his sanity."/"Shotgun looks good, wonder what side he's on."/"I heard that this breathtaking new title will be done in 'creative arcs," so does this mean there'll be a new creative team every few issues? Although I like variety, I wouldn't mind if you kept this team together for a long time. The artwork is almost an entity unto itself. Mr.'s Dixon, Romita and Janson, I am in awe of your respective abilities!"/"Well gentlemen I must confess that I felt no small amount of trepidation when I heard that there was to be a third monthly Punisher title. With two regular monthly books (PUNISHER and PUNISHER WAR JOURNAL), more than a few special projects, and guest appearances in just about every other Marvel title, the word over-exposure comes to mind. But after reading ZONE #1, I was pleasantly surprised. Here was the mayhem, the grit. I liked the contrast between how Micro and the Punisher deal with the deaths of their family members. I'm looking forward to the next few issues."/"I don't have the money to pay almost two dollars for a comic book...although, if John Romita Jr. does this book regularly, I might be able to find the funds."/"The confrontation between Frank and Micro showed a side of the Punisher that we haven't seen before: a somewhat paranoid war veteran watching his back."/"Will Shotgun be friend or foe-- or both? Frank Castle is not playing with a full deck."/"Will Micro come back to the Punisher?"/"Don't let Micro leave! Will the Punisher kill Shotgun?"/"Micro will be back, right?"/"Will Micro come back soon? And when he does, how will he be changed? Absolute trust between Micro and Frank-- will it ever return?"/"I'm willing to bet that Shotgun gets killed by the Punisher-- or otherwise dies."

Those comments came from: Michael Karlson, Jake Weisman, Them Bones, Robert J. Spassov, Arnold Jordan, John Adams, Marc Sumerak, Mark Herold, Keith Tackett, Jeff Densmore, R. Eric Clark, Carla M Kach, Jason Grande, Tim Matthews, Zack Smith, Travis Wester, Sam Drury, John Furia, Agent #00843, Steven Shaw, Larry Wright, Robert J. Hackathorn, Dave Wright, Terry L. Fouty, Derek Furman, Michael Costello, Dennis J. Jacobs, Rick Schwartz, and Gabe Hoskins, Jr..

Anyhow, we're still trying to finish opening the thousands of envelopes. We read every single letter and we pass the letters on to our creative personnel, so if you've got something on your mind, write to us! We can't reply to all of you individually-- if we did, we'd never be able to create these comic books-- but we *will* use this letters page as a forum to address any topic that seems to evoke your concern. Write to:

WAR CORRESPONDENCE
MARVEL COMICS
387 PARK AVE. SOUTH
NEW YORK, NEW YORK
10016

And for those of you itching to know more about W.A.M. (and neat stuff you can get...), write to :

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New York, New York
10016